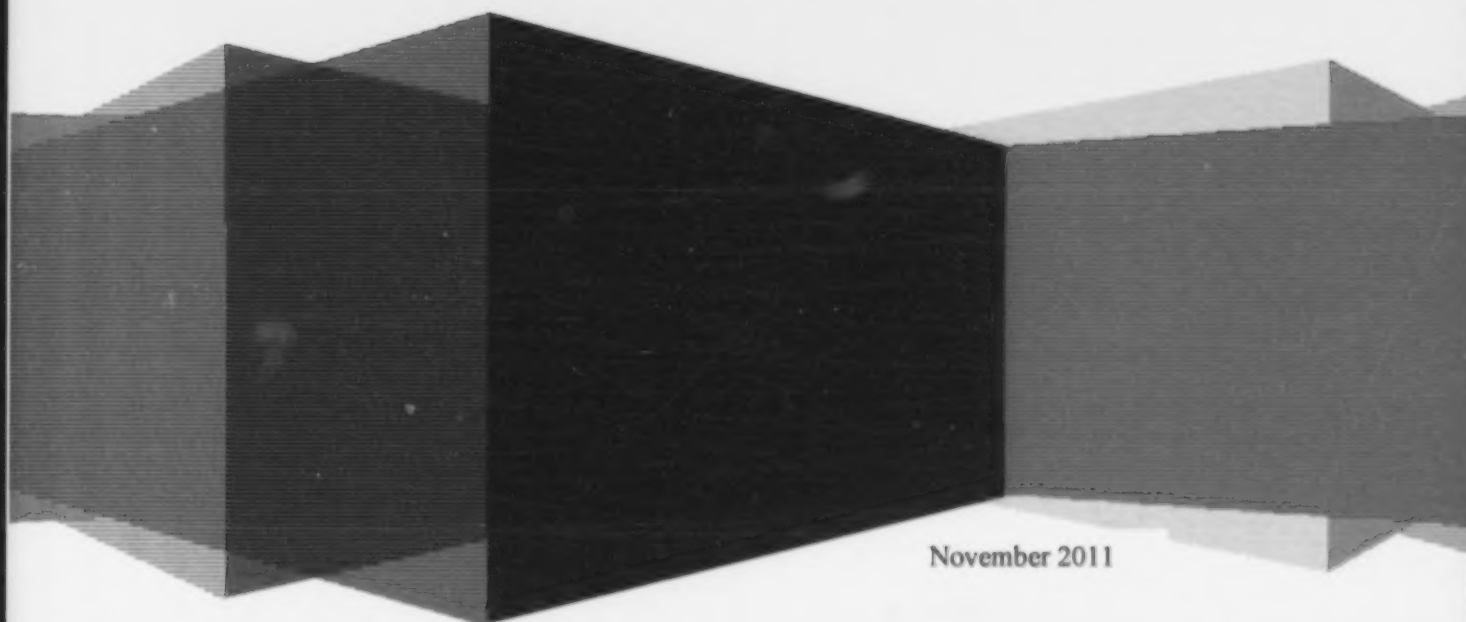


# **Research Capacity Program**

**2011-2012**

## **Competition Guidelines**

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November 2011

# **Research Capacity Program 2011-2012 Competition Guidelines**

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## 1.0 OVERVIEW

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The Research Capacity Program (RCP) is a competitive funding program designed to support the acquisition of small equipment and large research infrastructure to build capacity in Campus Alberta institutions and support multidisciplinary teams of researchers conducting excellent research and innovation initiatives.

The RCP is aligned with Alberta's research and innovation system and investments are made in the context of Government of Alberta (GoA) research and innovation priorities and Institutional Research Plan (IRP) priorities.

The RCP uses a cost-shared funding approach to provide up to 40% of the total eligible project costs for successful proposals, enabling projects to leverage support from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) and other sources. To facilitate this cost-shared approach, the RCP coordinates its competition streams and competitive cycles with the CFI, as shown in the table below. The RCP funding stream descriptions and timelines are outlined in section 9 of these guidelines.

**Table 1**

RCP STREAMS	CFI FUNDS	DESCRIPTION
Small Equipment Grants (SEG)	Leaders Opportunity	Supports research equipment for individual researchers or small teams
Research Infrastructure (RI) & Infrastructure Sustainability (IS)	New Initiatives & Leading Edge	Supports large research infrastructure for multidisciplinary research teams
College-Industry Innovation (CII)	College-Industry Innovation	Supports applied research infrastructure in the college/polytechnic sector

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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The intent of the program is to:

- Support quality and research excellence;
- Build capacity for innovation and support the attraction and retention of promising and established researchers; and
- Promote initiatives of strategic benefit to Alberta.

Achieving these objectives requires coordinated planning, prioritized research investments, and the sustainable and effective use of resources.

Establishing and sustaining state-of-the-art infrastructure undergirds Alberta's academic and economic competitiveness by providing the tools to generate new knowledge and to transform that knowledge into products, services, processes, and policies.

The RCP is focused on maintaining a strong base of research capacity by supporting the recruitment, retention, and development of skilled and talented people, and by building, enhancing, and sustaining leading-edge research and innovation infrastructure. As such, the RCP places a high priority on innovative research and scientific excellence and, like the CFI, invests in infrastructure that will enable researchers, institutions, and their partners, to develop exceptional research programs and transformative research.

### **Strategic Alignment:**

Although a key objective is to support research excellence and innovation across the spectrum of research activities, the RCP strongly encourages the submission of proposals that align with the strategic research priorities of the GoA and Alberta Innovates corporations. While the emphasis on alignment does not preclude the submission of proposals from other areas of research, priority will be given to applications that support GoA/Alberta Innovates priorities. A delineation of the priorities can be accessed through the following links:

[Alberta Research and Innovation Plan \(ARIP\)](#)  
[ARIP - Placemat](#)

### **CFI Coordination:**

In order to streamline the RCP process, the RCP guidelines are consistent with the CFI Policy and Program Guide. Accordingly, all submissions must adhere to the CFI's Guide with respect to eligibility criteria, application processes, and related requirements.

The RCP guidelines are thus intended to supplement the CFI Policy and Program Guide by articulating Alberta-specific requirements and processes associated with an RCP funding application.

### **3.0 ELIGIBILITY**

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#### **Eligible Institutions:**

The RCP adheres to the CFI's applicant eligibility guidelines. Accordingly, RCP streams are limited to institutions approved as CFI eligible. Please refer to the CFI's Policy and Program Guide's Section 3 for details.

The table below outlines the specific eligibility requirements of the RCP funding streams in relation to the CFI.

**Table 2**

<b>RCP STREAMS</b>	<b>ELIGIBILITY</b>
Small Equipment Grants (SEG)	Institutions with CFI Leaders Opportunity Fund allocations
Research Infrastructure (RI) & Infrastructure Sustainability (IS)	Institutions that have established CFI eligibility for the Leading Edge Fund and New Initiatives Fund
College-Industry Innovation (CCI)	Institutions that have established CFI eligibility for the College-Industry Innovation Fund

#### **Eligible Projects and Costs:**

The RCP will provide support for up to 40% of the total eligible project costs of successful proposals. The RCP will accept funding applications for equipment, renovations and/or expansions of existing space, and will consider projects that include the construction of new buildings. Details on eligible projects and costs are outlined in the CFI Policy and Program Guide's Section 4.

#### **RCP Capital Considerations:**

Proposals that require major capital construction funding will only be eligible if approval for the proposed building has been obtained via Advanced Education and Technology and/or other Government of Alberta (GoA) capital funding envelopes. In such cases, RCP funding support is normally restricted to equipment and fit-out costs, while funding contributions to the "bricks and mortar" components of such projects are normally expected to be derived from the above-noted capital construction funding sources (and/or leverage funding from other eligible sources like the CFI). Accordingly, capital contributions from AET and other GoA capital funding sources should be prorated as the capital building portion of an individual project. The prorated capital contribution, in combination with the requested RCP funding, normally should not exceed 40% of total project costs. Specifically, GoA capital building funding cannot be used to leverage RCP

funding. RCP support is intended to leverage the CFI and other sources to address total project costs.

These restrictions are intended to preclude the submission of major new building requests that have not been approved via the Alberta Ministries responsible for capital construction funding. The RCP cannot be used as a primary funding vehicle for financing the development of new capital infrastructure for research. Accordingly, the program cannot be used to circumvent provincial funding approval processes for capital planning and construction.

### **Operating Costs:**

The RCP will not provide support for operating costs, either interim or ongoing, with the exception of costs associated with the construction, installation, and set-up of the research infrastructure. Support for non-research related costs such as those associated with teaching and clinical/patient care space will not be supported.

A plan must be evident to support any ongoing operating and maintenance costs associated with the infrastructure.

### **Eligible Partner Contributions:**

Please refer to the CFI's Policy and Program Guide's Section 4 for details. In order to be eligible for support, project proponents must have a plan in place for securing the balance of project costs from eligible funding sources. The RCP is primarily aimed at leveraging the CFI awards that support Alberta priorities. Thus, the project scope, budget, and funding sources should be identical in the submissions to each program.

Accordingly, the RCP, like the CFI, considers any of the following as possible sources of partner contributions:

- Institutional funds (i.e., derived from applicant institution);
- Other Government of Alberta ministries
- Other government sources;
- Business and industry;
- Non-profit organizations;
- Endowments;
- Alberta Innovates corporations;
- User fees;
- Licensing fees and royalties.

*NOTE: In exceptional cases where other AET research funding sources, including capital contributions, are being used for equipment/infrastructure contributions, such sources, combined with the requested RCP contribution, should not exceed 40%.*



To coordinate with the CFI, the RCP normally does not consider the following sources to be acceptable:

- Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council;
- Canadian Institutes for Health Research;
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council;
- Tri-council programs (e.g. the Networks of Centres of Excellence and the Canada Research Chairs).

Funding for successful proposals will be conditional on securing the balance of project funding from partners within nine months from the time of approval. At the time of award finalization for successful projects, documentation from funding partners must be provided when partner funding is identified as secured.

### **Eligible Expenditures:**

Projects may include equipment, construction, renovations, specimens, and databases. Proposals must address strategic, fundamental infrastructure needs related to maintaining or enhancing the competitiveness of the Alberta university research system and contribute to Alberta's economic competitiveness and/or quality of life.

## **4.0 SUBMISSIONS**

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To streamline the application process, the RCP accepts submissions in the same format as those submitted to the CFI's corresponding RCP stream. Applications must follow CFI guidelines on eligibility, in-kind contributions, eligible expenditures, and funding partners.

Applicant institutions are responsible for the content of the Notice of Intent and Full Application submissions. A cover letter listing the institution's individual application submissions is also required.

A single-sided signed original, one hard copy, and an emailed PDF of each application must be received by the close of business day (4:30 p.m.) on the deadline dates.

Please send the corresponding hard copies and email copies to the following addresses:

Research Capacity Program  
C/O Research Capacity Planning Branch  
Alberta Advanced Education and Technology  
Suite 500, Phipps-McKinnon Building  
10020 - 101A Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5J 3G2  
**Email: Kate.Murie@gov.ab.ca**

## 5.0 REVIEW CRITERIA

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In coordination with the CFI, all requests for RCP funding are subject to a formal, independent, merit-based review. The review process will determine the relative merit of each application, with respect to the program criteria and the competitive context. Please refer to the CFI Policy and Program Guide's Section 5 for related details.

Notwithstanding coordination with, and leverage of, the CFI as a key program strategy, the RCP review and recommendation processes are independently conducted. The Minister of AET makes final funding decisions.

The RCP evaluates all proposals using the following four key criteria that reflect its mandate:

### 1. Quality of Research

*Quality of Research*

*Caliber of Researchers*

*Need for Infrastructure*

### 2. Enhancement of Capacity for Innovation

*Institutional Commitment*

*Management Plan*

*Operating and Maintenance Plan*

*Training of Highly Qualified Personnel*

*Collaboration*

### 3. Benefits to Canada

### 4. Alberta Alignment

*Alignment with the applicant institution's research and innovation priorities*

*Alignment with GoA/Alberta Innovates priorities*

Each application must be accompanied by a brief, 1-2 page, statement positioning the application in the context of the institution's research and innovation priorities, as articulated in the Institutional Research Plan and/or Comprehensive Institutional Plan, and the GoA/Alberta Innovates priorities. A delineation of the priorities can be accessed through the following links:

[Alberta Research and Innovation Plan \(ARIP\)](#)

[ARIP - Placemat](#)

A proposal must satisfy all four key criteria to a degree appropriate for the size and complexity of the infrastructure project. It is incumbent upon the applicant to demonstrate in the proposal how the project satisfies the requirements outlined under each criterion.



## **6.0 REVIEW PROCESS**

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The RCP's Multidisciplinary Review Panel (MRP) members are chosen for their in-depth understanding of the research and innovation environment, and for their collective ability to bring comprehensive, multidisciplinary expertise to the review process.

The review process encompasses three stages:

1. Expert review (where possible, CFI expert reviews will be shared and used);
2. Independent review by the MRP; and
3. Decisions by the Minister of AET.

The applications undergo expert review using the objectives and criteria identified in the RCP guidelines. In the case of Infrastructure Sustainability applications, which build on previous investments, the MRP members will be provided with information pertaining to prior related RCP/CFI investments.

The MRP uses the program guidelines and criteria to review all applications, taking into account the expert reviews and assessing the alignment of applications with Alberta's research and innovation priorities.

The MRP deliberations result in a set of recommendations which are provided to the Minister of AET to inform final decisions.

## **7.0 ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS**

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A contractual grant agreement will be developed for awarded projects. This agreement, outlines the terms and conditions of support and must be signed by both parties (Institutional Representative and AET Representative) prior to the release of payment.

As a part of this agreement, institutions will be required to regularly report on the financial status of projects and on the outcomes achieved. The schedule and reporting requirements will be outlined as a part of the agreement. Any significant variations in project scope or other requirements of the contract must be agreed to by both parties.

Violations of the contract, including failure to meet reporting schedules, can result in the return of all, or part, of the project funding. This may also cause a "holdback" of other RCP funding to the institution.

## **8.0 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT**

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Information gathered in the application forms are collected under the authority of the Minister of Alberta Advanced Education and Technology in accordance with section 33 (c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (the "Act"). It will be used in assessing applications to the RCP. The information contained in the applications is subject to the disclosure and privacy provisions of the Act. For further information please contact:

Ms. Kate Murie  
Manager, Research Funding  
Research Capacity Planning Branch  
(780) 422-0158

**Email:** [Kate.Murie@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Kate.Murie@gov.ab.ca)

## **9.0 RESEARCH CAPACITY PROGRAM COMPETITION STREAMS**

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### **9.1 COLLEGE – INDUSTRY INNOVATION (CII)**

The College-Industry Innovation (CII) stream is intended to support significant research infrastructure that would add to the existing applied research and technology development capacity of a college/technical institute. It should also provide tools and capabilities to expand an institution's network of partners, increase the number of collaborative projects with industry, and provide highly qualified personnel with opportunities to participate and gain know-how in applied research.

The CII seeks to enhance the capacity of colleges/technical institutes to support business innovation in Canada by providing them with state-of-the-art, industry-relevant research infrastructure to foster partnerships with the private sector, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, in an area of strategic priority to the institution and to Alberta.

There are two streams under the CII:

**Stream 1:** Pertains to infrastructure requests to enhance existing applied research and technology development capacity in colleges. Colleges/technical institutes with an established capacity are encouraged to apply to this stream. For example, those who have received a Five-Year College and Community Innovation (CCI) Innovation Enhancement (IE) grant or research and development funding from provincial, industrial, or other sources, are encouraged to apply to this stream.

**Stream 2:** Pertains to research infrastructure which is applied for in association with an application to the Five-Year Community College Innovation (CCI) Program – Innovation Enhancement (IE) grant – a joint application to the CFI/Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC). The CFI partners with NSERC for their upcoming 8th and 9th CCI-IE grant competitions.

#### **Applicant Eligibility:**

Eligible colleges/technical institutes can submit one proposal to each stream per competition, requesting up to \$800,000 in funding support from the CII.

#### **Application Deadlines:**

The 2011 Competition is now closed. The dates for Competition 2 are as follows:

	<b>Notice of Intent:</b>	<b>Application:</b>
<b>Stream 1</b>	<b>June 8, 2012</b>	<b>October 12, 2012</b>
<b>Stream 2</b>	<b>November 25, 2011</b>	<b>May 4, 2012</b>

## **9.2 SMALL EQUIPMENT GRANTS (SEG)**

Proposals will be accepted for strategic investments in research infrastructure which are essential to the projects described and are for the primary use of the Small Equipment Grant (SEG) candidate(s). The proposed investments must address strategic, fundamental infrastructure needs related to maintaining or enhancing the competitiveness of the proponents' research programs and the Alberta university research system.

### **Applicant Eligibility:**

Eligible applicants include institutions that have a CFI Leaders Opportunity Fund (LOF) allocation. Submissions are restricted to applications that have garnered a LOF award within the most recent LOF competition cycle.

Up to three candidates may apply together for one SEG award, but all co-applicants must be eligible candidates.

**Application Deadline:**                      **November 15, 2011**

## **9.3 RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE (RI)**

The Research Infrastructure stream coordinates with the CFI's New Initiatives Fund and is intended to enhance Alberta's capacity and competitiveness in areas of research or technology development by supporting new infrastructure projects that will lead to benefits for Albertans.

Eligible institutions are expected to submit only projects of exceptional quality which have not previously been supported as an RCP/CFI cost-shared project at the applicant institution(s). Specifically, this means that the project is not dependent upon the outcomes of previous projects funded at the institution through the RCP or the CFI's Innovation Fund, the International Joint Venture Fund, the College Research Development Fund, or the University Research Development Fund.

### **Application Deadlines:**

**Notice of Intent:**                              **February 3, 2012**

**Application Deadline:**                      **May 10, 2012**

## **9.4 INFRASTRUCTURE SUSTAINABILITY (IS)**

The Infrastructure Sustainability stream coordinates with the CFI's Leading Edge Fund to reinvest in highly productive research infrastructure of priority to the institutions to secure and strengthen Alberta's competitive position in research and technological development.

Eligible institutions are expected to submit only projects of exceptional quality that are dependent upon the results and outcomes from significant past RCP and/or CFI cost-shared investments. Specifically, these investments may include the RCP and the CFI's Innovation Fund, the International Joint Venture Fund, the College Research Development Fund, and the University Research Development Fund.

These projects must build on previous investments that have been implemented for sufficient time to demonstrate significant results.

Proposals must address strategic, fundamental infrastructure needs related to maintaining or enhancing the competitiveness of Alberta's innovation system while contributing to Alberta's economic competitiveness and/or quality of life. The focus is on strengthening competitive research and technology development activities that build on successful and productive initiatives enabled by past CFI/RCP investments in infrastructure.

### **Application Deadlines:**

**Notice of Intent:** February 3, 2012

**Application Deadline:** May 10, 2012